

Lead Federal Medicaid Official: Governor Barbour's Medicaid-to-Medicare Extension is Legally "Allowed"

***Mississippi Senate Attorneys: Governor Barbour Actions
"valid both under state and federal law"***

AG: "unable to review...on such short notice"

(Jackson, Miss.) Governor Haley Barbour today received further verification that his effort to extend the deadline for transitioning 65,000 PLADs (Poverty Level Aged and Disabled) Medicaid recipients to federal Medicare was proper procedure.

Mr. Dennis Smith, Director of the Center for Medicaid and State Operations (CMSO), said in a letter to Division of Medicaid Executive Director Dr. Warren Jones that Governor Barbour's effort to give PLADs recipients an additional 11 weeks was legally "allowed" and went so far as to call it "a commendable step".

In addition to that letter, Mississippi Senate Attorney Bob Davidson issued an opinion today to President Pro Tem Travis

Little stating that according to his office's legal research, Governor Barbour's action was "valid both under state and federal law."

Attorney General Jim Hood released a letter today stating that Governor Barbour "may" not have the authority to extend the deadline. Governor Barbour called on the Attorney General to reconsider his own letter regarding the extension in light of the letters from Mr. Smith and Mr. Davidson.

"The question is: Why would the Attorney General try to block me from helping these people?" said Governor Barbour. "Medicaid is a state *and* federal program."

The Attorney General states in his letter to Governor Barbour: "...we are simply unable to review all provisions of state and federal law and all state and federal regulations to certify that all statutes and regulations have been followed on such short notice..."

"We have 65,000 letters in process to go to our PLADs beneficiaries telling them about this 11 week extension. Since the Attorney General simply issued an informal letter, I hope our beneficiaries will realize that Governor Barbour's efforts to keep

them on Medicaid for additional time is not being overturned,”
said Dr. Warren Jones.

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